

Strategies of English Literature Teaching at English Literature Undergraduate Program at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University

By:

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Abstract

This research is originated in a wide gap between literature knowledge and didactic-methodical realm for those literary lectures at the research site. In fact, the method of English literary teaching is contextually considered being urgent to implement in the world of literary education. The teaching of English literature, so far, is under the shadows of English teaching since it becomes a global language. Hence, the teaching of English literature has a broad domain to research. As a trend lasting in the global education in modern age, it is necessary to learn and research strategies of English literary teaching practiced within the classrooms.

Such a research used a descriptive-qualitative method. The research data were collected through three techniques: observation, interview, and documents. The results of the three techniques are triangulated to be an intact information on the literary teaching, so-called primary data. The data analysis techniques used in this research, later on, are data identification, data categorization, data analysis and interpretation, and conclusion.

The result shows that seven respondents (lecturers) still used expocitory approach with the formal methods (lecturing, question-answer, group discussion) in their English literary teaching. They have not applied explorative method in which learning-based approach focuses on the students in the literary teaching. However, there are six difficulties (problem) in the teaching of English literature and thirteen solution to overcome those problems based on the observation and interview data.

Key terms: Teaching, Literature, method, approach, technique, literary education

A. Introduction

This study is concerned with investigating English literature teachers' strategy of teaching English literature. It attempts to answer complex problems relating to methods of teaching the English literature practiced by them in the classrooms. The problems, however, are analyzed in perspective of

methods of English literature teachers when they are teaching courses of English literature in the classrooms. So, this study focuses more on the teachers' behavior in providing learning materials on the English literature, such as poetry, prose, introduction to literature, literary criticism, survey of British and American literature, and the like.

On the other hand, English literature teaching as second or foreign language, in the viewpoint of Indonesian context, is considered being a serious problem. It is seen from products rising up at society—many men of letters do not come from the academic settings. It tends to explore mastery of reading literary works instead of seeing how to produce them in literary education. In this case, the literary teaching has not been productive. Students learn about how to read the literary works properly. Meanwhile, they have not directed to create or produce competitive works, so that many letter-men that are still surviving are not of academic background of literary study. Indeed, such an indication is so ironical since an academic culture should result in creative-writings—process-to-product oriented.

Furthermore, a lot of literary teaching problems, especially teaching of English literature, emerge up because teaching methods practiced by teachers cannot bring about change of thinking patterns, either of the teachers or of their students. Some literary teachers, by seeing empirical evidence, still apply the conventional teaching in classrooms; meanwhile a few have begun practicing electronic-learning or modern teaching in classrooms. Ideally, teaching of English literature needs to be able to harvest convincing results in the shape of creative-writings, especially literary works. In addition, the real problem,

in terms of literary teaching, is that an English literature teacher explores less how to develop productive methods of teaching English literature in classrooms. This reality becomes visible indication for some educational institutions in Indonesia. It is necessary to understand and at the same time develop methodology of literary teaching, especially that of English literature, since it is still considered being problematic. Accordingly, significant efforts, in teaching English literature, should be conducted to get convincing outcomes for educational development.

Moreover, the teaching English literature in Indonesian context is likely different from that in America, Australia, or England in which English language exists as a mother tongue. The English, as long as the writer knows, is politically considered being a foreign or second language in Indonesia. This phenomenon absolutely influences how the English literature is taught or learnt—so that, teaching and learning method becomes an analysis focus, so that methods of teaching English literature in a foreign or second language are expected to be more successful. In this case, the writer emphasizes teachers' strategy or technique in teaching English literature as an explorative topic in conducting research. Likewise, emphasis on teaching methodology in this research can give priority in the framework of contributing to



scientific findings in the world of literary teaching.

The teaching literature strategies in the classrooms, on such a view, developed by teachers get more intent attention in this research. This is based on imbalance between teaching on linguistics and on literature. For example, teaching of English grammar and proficiencies is more dominant than that of English literature. Moreover, such an indication happens in Indonesia in which English is still politically considered being a foreign language rather than a second language. In actuality, this problematic teaching gets our government involved because Indonesian government politically regulates education curriculum. In this case, the literary teaching is less attentive than grammar or skill teaching for *bahasa* and also English (see Musthafa, 2008:198). This indication is specific emphasis for the writer to explore, especially practice of education at the level of high education. This research, by such a reason, is conducted to analyze how the English literature lecturers take role of implementing or operating the teaching of English literature at the English Literature Department of *Adab* and Humanities Faculty.

On such a view, the English literature teachers in principle take an important role of directing the students to fully understand learning materials of English literature, such as poetry, prose, and drama. This

role has not been optimal and even still surface in practice of teaching English literature. This may be indicated from learning outcomes—outcomes of literary education, during this time, do not guarantee students being able to be productive writers. And event a person, whose educational background is not language study or literature one tends to have capability of producing writing works. It means that there is something mistaken in terms of literary teaching practice, mainly the teaching of English literature at the English literature Department of Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University. Such an phenomenon arouses curiosity of the writer to research the English literature teachers' strategy of developing teaching activity in the classrooms.

On the other hand, the existing problems do not only deal with aspects of teaching methodology but also correlate with world outside students as readers. It means that the literary works that the teachers provide in the classrooms are remote to them—there is no direct relationship between the world of literary works and that of readers (see Parkinson and Thomas, 2004:11). Such a distance causes the literary teaching problematic, especially the teaching of English literature at the English Literature Department. The research on methodology of teaching literature, by such an exegesis, is so necessary in context of teaching and learning

the literature in Indonesia. In addition, language and odd language are still problematic for students who get started with learning the literature. The literary text, as we know, tends to be out of ordinary language—it is a language with full of emotion, expression, or inner power of authors. Furthermore, the lack of functional authenticity is also problem for the teachers. More frequently an English literature teacher has difficulty to get an authentic resource of learning the literary works, such as novels, short stories, poems and plays. Thus, there is the most crucial problem in terms of teaching the English literature.

Next, other problems that should get the lecturers' attention are the both likely imbalance of knowledge and imbalance of power between teacher and students. the teachers, when working with older literature, frequently has a lot of information about biography, history, culture, linguistics, whereas the students almost have none, so the English literature teachers feels almost forced into lecture mode, simply telling the students what they should know and even think, perhaps even translating parts of the literary text. Therefore, it is more obvious that, in this case, the teachers' strategy in teaching the literature gets first place in exploring these researchable phenomena.

The teaching of English literature as second or foreign language is still minimal, mainly in the teaching context of Indonesia. It

is understandable and convincing that phenomenon on weakness of teachers' mastery of accurate, affective, and efficient methodology on teaching of English literature has been so intent at the English literature Department of *Adab* and Humanity faculty. Their teaching strategy, by such a reason, becomes major focus in conducting this research.

B. Theoretical Review

In general, the teaching theories can be applicable to all course or disciplines that are learnt in the academic settings. However, the teaching theories are here specified to the literature teaching because it becomes the research focus. In this case, the theories around the literature teaching are quoted from the experts' statements, ideas or notions. Thus, the truth becomes full responsibility in pursuance of the scientific world.

On such a view, the teaching theories used in this research firstly expose the teaching strategies in general. It means that they explore the known teaching stages: the pre-instruction, instruction, and assessment and evaluation. Nevertheless, in the literature teaching, there are meaningful difference at each of the teaching phases with their own reason, why one stage is not existing on another. Consequently, the theoretical foundation attached in the research is various in accordance with its function each other.



Furthermore, what the most important is students' learning activity in the teaching process. Degree of learning success is influenced much through the teaching approach used by the lecturers or teachers. In this case, it is better to know what the teaching approach is. Anthony (1972) defines that the approach is the set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning and teaching. On such a definition, the approach of teaching basically determines degree of learning activity—whether content of learning activity is high or low.

Meanwhile, Paulston and Bruder (1976) insist that an approach is the theoretical foundation upon which any systematic method is based. There are some opinions on the teaching approach or model. Anderson (1959:20) proposes two teaching approaches: teachers-centeredness and students-centeredness. The teachers-centered learning is also known as an autocratic type whereas the students-centered learning is as a democratic type. Moreover, Byron (1975:21) also confirms that there are two teaching approaches: expository approach and inquiry approach. The term *expository* basically equals to the teachers-centered approach and the *inquiry* is similar with the students-centered approach. In addition to that, Joyce and Weil (2000) clarify that there are four approaches or models in the teaching

activity. They are informational model, personal model, social-interaction model, and behavioral model.

The teaching methodology, in the world of education, is something vital to know about and to apply. It tends to be exposed in any disciplines, especially at pedagogy. As each teacher or lecturer needs to understand and employ the teaching methodology (especially for the literary teaching), it makes up a pathway to deepen meaningful teaching and learning in the classrooms. Some people, however, underestimate existence of methodology at any informal situation, whereas in actuality it is so crucial to practice in order that desirable intention can be got. Thus, the methodology (viz. the whole teachers' behavior in the classrooms) takes a significant role of attaining success of education as a whole.

The mastery of literary teaching methodology constitutes a major pillar as to make our literary teaching more successful. At some schools, several teachers or lecturers sometimes care less about it, whereas implementation of the methodological ways in the classrooms is very necessary to conduct. As such, each teacher or lecturer is so expected to be capable of mastering and practicing the literary teaching methodology properly, so that the literary teaching targets may be touched or obtained. It is likely hard to state that the



teaching will be productive unless a literature teacher or lecturer cannot master or understand the teaching methodology, especially the teaching of literary genres: poetry, prose and drama.

By emphasizing the literature teaching strategies, in this respect, Moody (1971:61) insists that there are six stages of literary teaching that can be applied to poetry appreciation, namely (1) preliminary assessment, (2) practical decision, (3) introduction to the work, (4) presentation of the work, (5) discussion, and (6) reinforcement (testing). Next, Taba (2005) confirms that there are three stages of literary teaching: (1) concept-forming, (2) data interpreting, and (3) principle applying. Also, William J.J. Gordon (2005) offers a model of literary teaching—it is so called *synectics model*. Such a model leads students to understand poems through metaphoric process to analogy. It has three techniques: (1) personal analogy, (2) direct analogy, and (3) pressed conflict.

In addition, Rodrigues and Badaczewski (1978:5) offer a teaching model of literary appreciation, consisting of nine stages. They are (1) class discussions, (2) group discussions, (3) one-to-one discussions, (4) role-playing, (5) dramatization of scenes, (6) media presentations, (7) interest of value surveys, (8) creative writing, and (9) literary reviews. Also, Leslie Stratta (in Endraswara, 2005) explains that there are three major

steps in the literature teaching: (1) tuning, (2) interpreting, and (3) recreating.

On the other hand, the literature teaching is also facing some problems, especially for any countries which position that English is as a second or foreign language. In this case Thomas and Parkinson (2004) propose that there are six problems faced by those people who are learning the English literature in the developing countries. They are (1) remoteness, (2) the literature has odd and difficult language, (3) the literature has lack of functional authenticity, (4) the students usually have imbalance of the four skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), (5) there is likely imbalance of knowledge and power between the lecturers and their students, and (6) in the literature teaching there is often no sequencing and staging posts.

C. Research Method

This research uses the descriptive method in its investigation. The data description is undertaken through the analytical ways, so that its explanation has characteristics of sufficient description—the research data depict the facts as they are. In this matter, the descriptive method applied in this research attempts to account for the data in perspective of the grounded meanings. On the other words, the research findings are projected into the deepest meanings around the literature teaching strategies



conducted by the lecturers (respondents). Moreover, the descriptive research method is also adapted with data type—verbal data collected from the both observation and interview. Thus, it is obvious that the choice of descriptive method can be stated as something reasonable because of several characteristics mentioned above.

Later on, the data collection techniques that are done in the research are two kinds: the direct observation and interview. The direct observation or survey was directly conducted during two months: from February to March in 2017. In this case, this step was done by firstly following the respondents (lecturers), who were going to get into the classrooms. Secondly, the researcher, in the classroom, sat on the chair paying attention on how the lecturer taught the students the literature genre (poetry). Thirdly, during in the classroom, all activity of teaching-learning on the poetry from the beginning to the end was noted and also understood as the primary research data by which the research questions could be solved. This observation was conducted to some lecturers teaching the literature genres. Moreover, it is non-participant observation—the researcher acts as an observer in the classrooms, although the researcher also had ever taught one of the literary genres. And eventually field notes as a result of direct observation in the classrooms were considered as

primary data to process in the data analysis.

Meanwhile, the interview was done to seven respondents by proposing a number of questions to them. It was conducted as an instrument for collecting the data and aimed at gaining the information missed in the observation and checking the consistency between what the respondents had done in the classroom (during the observation) and what they had said, and to construct more valid data gained from the respondents (see Alwasilah, 2003). The semi-structured interview was done in order to make the respondents free to respond or answer all the research questions proposed. The respondents whom the researcher interviewed are seven lecturers: DN, PP, DP, UE, HA, LA and N. They were selected based on their involvement and their role as the lecturers of the English literature genres. Furthermore, the interview was administered in the researcher's room, so that the respondents could answer all of the proposed questions and feel safe.

In addition, this research is located at the English literature department of *Adab* and Humanities Faculty of Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University. Population of the research is all of the lecturers teaching the English literature genres. They are seven lecturers whom the researcher interviewed and observed. And the data sample used in such a research is a quota

sampling—all participant or respondent becomes a research subject.

D. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the research findings are identified based on the both observation data and interview ones. The findings processed from the observation data indicate that they possess high level of accuracy. Nevertheless, those findings still imply the weaknesses, which can be covered by the interview data, so that the both are combined to attain the research findings. The observation data show the relevance with the lecturers' strategies in the teaching of English literature genres. It means that the data are regarded as the primary data—representative ones to use for answering the research questions. A lot of weaknesses, however, are found in the case of the practice of the English literature teaching, especially models of the literature teaching. These observation data also discuss the major issues as given in the document analysis, such as portrait of the lecturers' strategies in the literature teaching, their difficulties in the teaching of English literature genres, and some ways to solve the problems. Therefore, they are data-based and driven.

Next, the lecturers (respondents), based on the both observation and interview data, attempted to explain the students, the learning material by lecturing. There are some reasons why the lecturer

conducts the direct method when teaching the learning material in the classroom. In this case, the reason, as stated in the theory of Beach and Marshal (1991), is that the students understand the learning material more directly; and that the lecturer's explanation is more memorable for the students. This method is implemented at the beginning of the lecture. On the other words, the lecturer deliberately practiced such a method as to explain the new learning material in the classroom. The lecturer, on the data above, conveyed the learning material around poetry that the students had not understood, so that it is nature the lecturing method is conducted. In addition, the lecturer also practiced the question-answer method in construction of her class to be live in the classroom. In this matter, she attempted to share her experience with the students; that is why the question-answer method is practiced in the classroom. There are some reasons, as stated in theory of Beach and Marshal (1991) in the chapter two, why the lecturer conducted this method. Some considerations in terms of such teaching method are that the method can stimulate the students in order to think; that the method can make the students know how deep the learning material around poetry has been mastered or understood; and that it is able to give the students chance to propose problems they have not understood. Moreover, it seems that the lecturer also practiced the eclectic method in



the literature teaching. The lecturing method and the question-answer, on the other words, are combined by purpose to keep the class more alive, so that the students are expected to be able to understand what the lecturer teaches. Thus, the lecturer, based on the observation data above, applied the three teaching methods: lecturing, question-answer, and eclectic method.

The approach or model of literature teaching, based on the observation data above, is expository or information model. It means that order of sequence of this model is that the lecturer explained first the learning material; then the students read it; then the topic is discussed together amongst them; and then the evaluation is conducted at the end of learning time. This model can be adapted from Rodrigues and Badaczewski's model (1978:5) around the literature teaching at the first stage: class discussion. On the other words, the lecturer attempts to construct the class discussion on the poetry through proposing some questions to the students about the elements of poetry.

On the other hand, because the literature teaching faces some problems to be solved, the problems rising up in pursuance of the data interpretation are consistent with the theory proposed by Thomas and Parkinson (2004). They are problems about remoteness, difficult and odd language, lack of the functional authenticity, imbalance of

the four English skills of the students, imbalance of the knowledge and power between the lecturers and their students, and no sequencing staging posts. Their solution is that those problems, based on the interview data to the respondents, can be overcome through thirteen ways proposed with regard of the three crucial aspects: students, lecturers, and the educational institution.

E. Conclusion and Suggestion

1. Conclusion

It is concluded that in the literature teaching practice in the research site the teaching methods are still classical, such as the lecturing, question-answer, and discussion. The lecturers have not attempted to holistically practice the procedures of literature teaching as stated by the theorists or experts. The teaching model or approach still shows the expository or information model—exhibiting the lecturer-centeredness, so that those ways absolutely implicate with the literature teaching techniques. Since the literature teaching methods are practiced in the classroom, the teaching faces some difficulties that should be overcome. The six problems are relevant with the suggestion raised by Parkinson and Thomas (2004). However, based on the interview data, the lecturers or respondents give thirteen ways as an alternative solution to them.



2. Suggestion

It is suggested that exploring the deeper research about the English literature teaching at another site is necessary to conduct. This is intended to fulfill the emptiness of this research that has not been covered yet. Even though the transferability of the research findings can be tested, efforts of researching the same topic are better to realize in order to get the more convincing results. As the English literature teaching sometimes has different characteristics between one place and another, it is also suggested to seek out more credible resources in terms of the literature teaching and its problems. In this case, the pedagogic world—especially around the literature teaching can develop or progress in which the human dignity or humanism will be able to be maintained or preserved. In final, the weaknesses of this research have to be realized and the beneficial sides of it are expected to be accepted.

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